UNDERGROUND '76. THE BERKELEY CON. THE BIG PARTY. The theme of this year's all-underground con is a retrospective look at the sixties. The art show coordinated by John Wozniak will feature early work by Joel Beck, Gilbert Shelton, Robert Crumb, and later work by Trina, Larry Todd, Jay Kinney, Ted Richards, and others we have yet to contact. There will be a second art show in another room which will be coordinated by Mark Seidenberg and will feature the work of new artists. Our entertainment and educational program is designed to give our guests an overall view of the history and present status of underground comix. Harvey Kurtzman will be speaking on the humor magazines like MAD, TRUMP, and HELP! which were precursors of the ugs. It was Kurtzman who gave artists like Crumb, Shelton, and Holmes their first national exposure in the public gallery of HELP! Clay Geerdes will show slides of underground newspaper art and talk about the relationship between the earliest comix and the poster trip. Panels and chalk-talks and workshops are now being planned. Some of these will be for the general fan while others will be designed with the new artist in mind. A number of local artists will help with an Artists' Information Center that will show newcomers what is and is not possible in alternative publishing these days. At the Center will be a board where artists may list projects & solicit art or assistance from others attending. A want list board will be in the same area for those who are collecting early ugs and want to meet and get to know other collectors. Our dealer's room will offer a wide selection of in and o.p. ugs as well as EC's, Golden Age, Marvels, Fantasy posters and other materials of interest to comic fans. A film program and numerous live acts are scheduled, including an underground fashion show, rock dance, belly dance troupe, and THE FREE STORE THEATER CO. It all takes place April 30-May 2. U of Calif. in Berkeley. $6.50. $2.50 single day. Join us. C.G.

COMIX WORLD 44. Copyright Clay Geerdes, P. O. Box 507, Cotati, Ca 94928. World Rights Reserved $3.50 for 12 issues. $6.50 for 24. All back issues for $7. This issue is designed to teach you how to lay out your own mini-eight pager for offset printing. Fold it twice, staple it, and trim the top edge. Another freelancing memoir!

A lot of preachers write, but a writer shouldn't preach. Not about others. He might want to talk to himself in his writing, but even then it should be relevent to others. Who gives a shit what I think? On the other hand, lots of people might get a few laughs out of the kinds of experience I have had. Where do you start? Anywhere. Pick an image off the top of your brain and you're started. Non-fiction is fiction and fiction is non-fiction. If what you've got to say is the truth, fictionalize it and call it a novel like Mary Loos did in THE BEGGARS ARE COMING. Focus on anger and lust and humiliation, strong emotions, and write them out while they are happening to you. If you wait, you'll find yourself unable to get the flavor. It is real right at the moment when you hate some asshole for fucking you over. Reason just fucks up good drama and if you wait and get retrospective it won't come out clean. Non-fiction is always a lot of crap. Ever read a presidential biography that told you about the president lifting candy from the dimestore when he was eight or looking up his Mom's dress to see what her cunt looked like? Uncensored non-fiction is so rare, it's not even worth bothering with. I've written hundreds of fictional non-fiction articles for magazines. It's all made-up or inconsequential. When I used to knock out articles for the girly-mags, I'd do the photography, look at it, and write the copy around the pictures, making up the name of the woman, the name of the writer, and the idea. Some of it was real reportage, but it might have come from as many as a dozen different sources. The idea comes first and it's always a variation on the same simple idea because all mags buy what they already have. They don't want anything different and they wouldn't recognize it if it came along. They want slick nude shots of standard-looking women, and they want some witty commentary to justify the pictures. In a photo-fantasy spread, you need not write anything, but those fantasies are usually dictated by the editors. The whole magazine is the publisher's fantasy and he has usually chosen his editor because the guy convinced him he would come across with the party line. The subject of men's magazines is women and the subject of women's mags is men. All the mags are uncomfortable with cock shots, though a few do print them. You'll notice that even the soft-focus couple spreads usually focus on the woman. I'm talking here about the freelance market. Once in a great while you may slide through an article on trout fishing or something that isn't sexual in content, but it's goddamned rare, and if you work steadily you're grinding out sex articles. But what about HARPER'S and ATLANTIC and the 'respectable' mags? No, I don't consider them freelance markets anymore than I do the syndicated papers. They buy such a small percentage from the mails that I gave up on them long ago. The outside material that is not assigned usually comes from name writers. Face it, there isn't much space and there are a lot of people competing for what little there is. Mass circ mags have to buy names to sell. The girly-mags sell sex, not names, but even these prefer to deal with writers on a regular basis. Once you know the format, length, dos and don'ts of a slick, you can keep on selling it as long as you can tolerate the boredom of grinding it out. I know. What about poetry, short stories, and novels? Have a good time, buddy. Of the three, the novel is the best bet, but you'd better be in New York and aggressive enough to get past the secretaries. The majority of the big houses don't even accept mss anymore. They tell you to get a literary agent and that's as hard as getting in to see the editor of Random House. The slicks are always overstocked on fiction, and they don't buy poetry.

GUY COLWELL

I met Guy Colwell for the first time when I was in the process of building the image of the first ug comix con. Early 1973. He had a book with him & it contained photographs of his paintings, five of which had been stolen from his pad. We had coffee in what was then Hardcastle's on Telegraph and Guy was the center of an amazed ring of people almost before he was aware that they had slipped over to check out the pictures. Most of the people were black and they were astounded that a whitey (actually Guy's a redhead, which means he grew up in a special category) could paint black people with such authenticity. And it's true. Colwell's art is unique in that he manages to arrest or capture character in both the expression and stance of his figures. His first Inner City Romance Comic was a masterpiece of realistic story-telling, the tale of three men who get out of prison and begin to readjust to the late sixties world they enter. It was called "Choices" and was based upon Colwell's own experiences in the McNiel Island Federal Prison Camp. Guy was there for resisting the draft in 1968-9. His second comic, Radical Rock, was an extension of themes begun in Choices. Both were published by Last Gasp Comix & sold out. A painter at heart, Guy decided his third book, Earth Brecciate would be all paintings, a work to be produced in color. He did the book and took it around to conventions, but the project was too expensive for any American ug publisher to handle. Colwell met Cozmic Comics publisher Felix Dennis and made a tentative agreement to have the book produced in Europe. Earlier this year, Last Gasp published a limited edition of Colwell's paintings under the title, BACKWATER BABIES. Guy taught at the Good Times Commune. Born March 28, 1945. Oakland. C.G

It takes a good hustler, a fast-thinker, and a quick mover to make it freelancing. Take faddism. Most pop writting deals with it. To really get into it, you have to know the texture of contemporary society, the fashions and the attitudes. When I got on a bus in Berkeley a few weeks ago and saw five or six teenaged girls wearing lipstick, powder, mascara, and perfume, I knew it was a trend, a new thing, but I knew that only because I am familiar with Berkeley mores and know that the woman in town haven't worn make-up since the mid-sixties when the plain style of radicalism made lipstick & rouge unfashionable. Liberation meant throwing a lot of things out, including lipstick and bras & Ponl home permanent kits. For the teengers from Berkeley High, the make-up symbolizes liberation from the mores of their radical-hip parents, but a stranger to the area would not know that. As a freelancer, I've been able to sell a lot of articles because I can walk down Telegraph Avenue and immediately spot what is different. Fashion styles do the same. One day a woman splits a pair of jeans and sews a piece of colorful material inside to create a jean-skirt. The next season, jean-skirts are mass-marketed through one of the chains and copied it to sell. Writers work that way. See a new trend, photograph it, write it up and send it to the mags in hopes that you've made it onto the editor's desk first. The longer articles may be researched later if you get a bite. I used a fashion example, but I could have used politics, because Berkeley is a city where belief and fashion mesh. Radical women don't wear make-up. If you see a woman walking on the campus in a mini-skirt, she's a secretary in one of the more conservative departments on the UC campus. An article on the way fashion reflects politics and vice versa has a chance in dozens of mags. Watch faddism.

BREAKING IN. A lot of young artists want to rush into print long before they are ready. Fine. But at their own expense, not at someone else's. It's in an artist's favor if he finds someone willing to subsidise his apprenticeship by printing up his exercises. This is the contemporary counterpart of the Medieval European system of patronage. It applies to those who show artistic promise, not to those who simply manifest a passion for comic doodling. If you're serious about comic art, you have to study, and I don't mean sitting around in your room tracing and imitating comic strips and characters. People are always asking me how they can break into comics. Take a good graphic arts class and learn the technology and materials. To try to do comics without learning the basics like anatomy and perspective is like trying to build a radio without knowing the difference between a resistor and a capacitor. You're right, few schools deal with comics, even in their art curricula, and that's why we're working to build training program and demonstration into our comic conventions. The new artists have to see original artwork, not the reduced printed copy, and they have to see demonstrations of technique. Draw from life. Use what you know. Get out and observe what's happening. What good does it do you to spend hours drawing a second-rate imitation of Spider-man or Batman? If there is a single prominent difference between the overground Eastern comics and the West Coast underground, it is the imitative, repetitive nature of the former in contrast with the uniqueness and personal vision of the latter. Ug artists write and draw their own fantasies in their own eccentric styles, and they are the wave of the future. Those who continue to imitate superheroism are going to be unemployed, because an insufficient number of kids are buying those Marvels and DCs to keep the industry alive. You want criticism, publish yourself and send copies around. Get it together. C.G

As a street reporter in the sixties, I knocked out some crazy pop sociology. One of my articles (Los Angeles FREE PRESS) was titled "Is long hair a Psycho-sexual threat to the State?" It dealt with what was then a new androgyny. The Berkeley of '67 was divided between the long haired hippies and the short haired jocks. The war between hip and straight was in full swing. Hippies were getting high & digging electric music while the straights were holding on to what was left of the Kingston Trio. The cops (Pigs) were all short-hairs and in their passion to break up street demonstrations and marches they seemed to delight in pulling longhair and beating the heads attached to it. Always the focus was on the hair. Today, we take longhair and beards & nose-rings for granted, but in 1967 a long-haired man on a short-haired turf meant blood on the sidewalk. A lot of women liked and accepted the longhair right away, but macho men had a hell of a time with it. What were those guys, fags? And why did the girls hang out with them if they were faggots? It's simply historical fact that hundreds of young guys got the shit stomped out of them in the mid-sixties not because they were pro-Lenin or Mao, but because they grew their locks long & triggered a severe hate response from the athletes and the cops.

Psychedelic drugs revived beliefs in astrology & magic and I wrote an article called "The Magic Age: We Want the World and We Want it Now." This one dealt with the impatience young people were expressing in the slow processes of the older culture. On acid, everything was beautiful and spontaneous and relationships were immediate and entire lifetimes came and went on the surface of a drop of water on a green leaf, but when hip folks dropped acid around straights they often unleashed monsters of competition, hatred, jealousy, envy, and other side-effects of businesscult, causing what was called a bummer or bad trip. How did it all come out in your part of the world?

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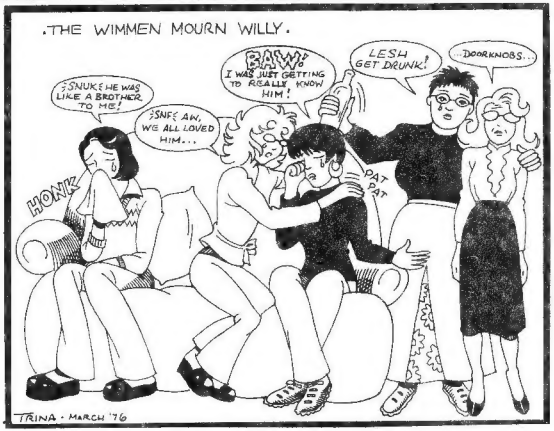
.THE WIMMEN MOURN WILLY.
?SNUKE HE WAS LIKE A BROTHER TO ME?
?SNIFF AW, WE ALL LOVED HIM...
BAWK BAWK I WAS JUST GETTING TO REALLY KNOW HIM!
LESH GET DRUNK!
DOORKNOBS..
HONK
PAT PAT
TRINA · MARCH '76

WILLY MURPHY OCTOBER 12, 1936-Mar 2, 1976

Satirist Willy Murphy died suddenly when a case of the flu expanded into pneumonia. His last completed work was a page which will appear in the May issue of NatLamp. Murphy was born October 2, 1936, in Brooklyn, N. Y. and spent his adolescence in Lewiston, Maine, and Berlin, New Hampshire. Three years Navy. Degree from Rhode Island School of Design in '61. He worked in advertising, then turned to ug comix in '68, doing strips for EVO, TRIBE, SUNDAY PAPER. First solo book was Flamed-out Funnies in 1975. Shelby Sampson described his funeral in a letter to me which I quote: "The funeral was as marvelous as they can go. We dressed Willy in his dungarees, denim jacket, plaid shirt, and t-shirt he'd done with the 2 turds shaking hands and the legend "get your shit together". I'd like to have seen the morticians' faces when they saw what we'd brought to bury him in. Also a copy of the SF Chronicle for the morning he'd died, his favorite coffee cup, and, of course, Flamed-Out Funnies. Ted, Nikki (Willy's ex-wife), Trina, Melinda and Justin delivered beautiful statements at the funeral. My contribution was to open one of his bottles of rare wine (a $49 bottle he had discovered, to his delight, mistakenly marked $4.99 a few weeks ago) at the grave site and pass it around, pouring the last few gulps on the coffin. We had a fine gathering after the funeral at my place, as Willy and I had never had our housewarming party since I'd moved in. Whole buncha people who would never normally be caught under the same roof congregating together-perhaps the testament most telling of Willy's character. God, We'll miss him." Shelby, 3/10/76

The Rip-Off Press sent out an obituary written by Gilbert Shelton, and, at this writing, a memorial collection of Willy's work is being planned. Marc Miyashiro has done a drawing commemorating Willy's contribution to comix which will be on display at the Berkeley Con. Gary Arlington said, "He was the first member of that original underground scene to go." The last time I saw Willy was a few days before his death. He had just come in the door of Rip Off Press with David Sheridan. With Richards and Sheridan, he was working on Rip-Off's American revolution comic. I remember him smiling.

WHAT SECRET? I'LL TELL YOU! FOR YEARS, WE AT MCDONALDS HAVE PRIDED OURSELVES ON OUR ABILITY TO OBTAIN ONLY THE CHEAPEST TRASH MEAT! PEOPLE CAME TO DEPEND ON IT... IT GAVE OUR PRODUCT ITS UNIQUE, IRRESISTABLE FLAVOR!
I SEE...
NGHH
BUT... IN RECENT YEARS... AS PET FOOD FIRMS MADE INROADS INTO THE PROFITABLE SENIOR CITIZENS MARKET, SOURCES OF THESE PRIZED FOODSTUFFS DRIED UP, AND WE WERE FORCED TO TURN TO... ER.. OTHER METHODS — AS YOU, WRECKMAN, HAVE SO UNFORTUNATELY DISCOVERED!
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